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SUBJECT: SPLM ADVISES THE USG TO KEEP PRESSURE ON THE GOS
IN ORDER TO GET IMPLEMENTATION ON DARFUR

REF: KHARTOUM 1651

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez, reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. Secretary General of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) Pagan Amum told CDA Fernandez on November 13 that it is important for the USG to maintain pressure on the Government of Sudan (GoS) if the GoS is to move from the announcement of concessions on Darfur to implementation of the latter. He speculated that GoS President Omar Al-Bashir was genuine in offering concessions to Darfurians at the closing ceremony of the Sudan Peoples' Initiative (SPI) on 12 November because Bashir feels that achieving peace in Darfur is his only way out of a looming ICC indictment. Meanwhile, Amum said that the NCP henchmen surrounding Bashir may not be as serious as Bashir on implementation of the SPI matrix of options. They will likely reverse their progressive tune when and if ICC pressure on the regime lets up (or when Bashir is indicted). Amum told CDA Fernandez that international pressure also needs to be put on the Darfur rebel groups to participate in negotiations. According to Amum, Chadian President Idris Deby is the only person who can truly persuade key groups, such as Khalil Ibrahim's Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), to negotiate with the GoS. Amum recommended that the USG strengthen its relationship with Deby and seek to have him play a critical role in facilitating peace in Darfur. End Summary.

KEEP THE PRESSURE COMING

12. (C) Secretary General of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) Pagan Amum told CDA Fernandez on 13 November that the USG should not ease up on its pressure on the Government of Sudan (GoS) between the change of US administrations. Responding to CDA Fernandez's question on whether or not the 12 November declarations made by GoS President Omar Al-Bashir on improving the situation in Darfur were sincere or just theatrics, Amum said that he believes that Bashir is really looking for a way out of a potential ICC indictment and is therefore serious about making progress on Darfur (reftel). Bashir believes that if he can reach a peace agreement on Darfur that serves to rally the Sudanese behind him, particularly the Darfurians, this will be his way out of an indictment. "He is ready to implement what he has said," said Amum, but the question is, "is the National Congress Party (NCP) willing to go through with the implementation of these things or will they try to wiggle their way out of doing the right thing?" Doing the right thing is not in their interest, said Amum, who shared the podium with Bashir on November 12, subbing for Salva Kiir.

CDA Fernandez remarked that there is intense pressure on the regime to do the right thing now, but when that pressure wanes, the NCP will likely reverse its course. Amum agreed, saying "this is what we should expect they will do." In order to sustain the GoS' recent positive momentum on addressing the problem of Darfur, Amum urged the USG to maintain its pressure on the GoS. Continued pressure during the change of US administrations is important, said Amum. "This time is critical for Sudan," he said. The NCP is planning for a gap between US administrations which they believe will be a "time of relaxation" for them, said Amum. If USG pressure on the GoS wanes during the change of administrations, there is no way the new USG administration can easily regain the pressure it currently has on the regime, he claimed.

13. (C) CDA Fernandez asked Amum how the international community, along with the SPLM and other Sudanese opposition forces, could persuade the NCP to implement the Sudan Peoples' Initiative (SPI) matrix of options for resolving the Darfur dispute, and in particular the items that Bashir announced during the closing ceremony of the SPI on 13 November. "Bashir wants to be seen as the person who stops the war," said Amum. Bashir was serious when he said he would like UNAMID to be empowered to carry out its role effectively in Darfur, he said. Bashir's readiness to provide individual and collective compensation for the displaced and refugees is a new and positive concession by the regime, said Amum. Furthermore, the idea that there will be community policing within the IDP camps to enhance security could be a big deal, said CDA Fernandez, because people will have the power to defend themselves. Amum said

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that the way forward to achieve implementation of these lofty commitments announced by Bashir is to keep the pressure on the GoS to do the right thing and this pressure must be exerted intelligently and specifically, by pressing the regime on commitments and promises it is making. Pressure will have to be sustained in order for us to move into negotiations, said Amum. At negotiations, we can then begin to work on power and wealth-sharing options with the Darfur rebel movements, he suggested. Amum impressed upon the CDA that it is equally as important to bring pressure to bear upon the Darfur rebel movements to participate in negotiations. "As the NCP continues to weaken and give concessions to the movements, this will be a signal to the movements that they should not negotiate" and instead hold out for more concessions. "They will conclude that they can gain more by waiting," said Amum. Fernandez added that the movements may also choose to escalate in the face of a weakened NCP if they believe they can get more out of it. "The movements cannot tip the balance, but they can keep things unsettled."

GETTING THE REBELS TO BITE AND THE DEBY FACTOR

14. (C) Amum told CDA Fernandez that it is time to get the rebel movements to adopt one position. "When SPLM Deputy Secretary General for the Northern Sector Yasir Arman and I visited Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim on the Sudan-Chad border in October, he told us that JEM was the only rebel force that should negotiate with the NCP," said Amum. "Arman and I told Khalil that he must also work with the Sudan Liberation Movement's (SLM's) Abdel Wahid Al-Nur, the Sudan Liberation Army - Unity's (SLA-Unity's) Abdallah Yehia, and the United Resistance Front's (URF's) Bahar Idriss Abu Garda." CDA Fernandez stated that uniting rebel movement demands was the job of AU-UN Chief Mediator Djibril Bassole, who is supposed to be engaging in shuttle-diplomacy with the groups in order to bring them to one single position. "There are problems with Bassole," said Amum. "The Chadians don't like him - I don't know why, but I think it's because he is from Burkina Faso and Burkina Faso and Chad do not enjoy good relations," said Amum. CDA

Fernandez asked Amum if in turn the Chadian-backed rebel movements, such as JEM, also do not like Bassole. Amum responded that he didn't think the movements had a problem with Bassole, but that the real problem is that Bassole "has no access to those within the movements making decisions on the ground." "Bassole hasn't visited Chad in a long time," he continued. CDA Fernandez remarked that Bassole could be far more effective if he was more aggressive in his approach to uniting the groups. What he should be doing is camping-out on the Sudan-Chad border and talking to these groups day after day.

15. (C) "I see Chadian President Deby as the only force on earth that is organic to the problem of Darfur," said Amum. "Peace in Darfur will serve Deby and his regime loyalists and keep them in power." Deby is the only person who can persuade Khalil Ibrahim (a fellow Zagahwa) and other Darfur rebel movement leaders to reach a Darfur peace agreement with the NCP. This attribute gives Deby a "very special position" for peace in Darfur, continued Amum. Amum encouraged the USG to cultivate a much stronger relationship with Chadian President Deby in order to get Deby involved in working towards a Darfur solution. "The Chadian role is very important to peace in Sudan and the region," stated Amum. The USG should continue to put pressure on the NCP and the rebel movements to reach a solution to the Darfur crisis and seek to involve the Government of Chad to get there, said Amum.

16. (C) As for the NCP and the Zagahwa factor, Amum explained to CDA Fernandez that the NCP has made a strategic decision not to use the Zagahwa to destroy rebel movements in Chad. The NCP has learned that it cannot train Zagahwa and use them as elite forces to wipe out Chadian President Idris Deby's forces and Chadian-backed GoS-opposed rebel groups, said Amum. "The NCP is very bitter" over the fact that it trained Zagahwa whom it trusted to be GoS-supporting Islamic loyalists and many of these Zagahwa have defected and flipped their loyalty to Chadian President Deby, who is a Zagahwa himself. One of these individuals has become a special advisor to President Deby, and two others have become Zagahwa rebel leaders (JEM's Khalil Ibrahim, a former prominent member of the Khartoum regime, is the primary example). The

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NCP has discovered that the Zagahwas' tribal allegiance trumps their allegiance to Islamism, said Amum. As a result, the NCP would rather use tribes that do not exist in Sudan to wipe out the GoS-opposed movements in Chad and the Deby regime, he said.

THE EGYPTIAN EQUATION

17. (C) Amum questioned the CDA about the rumor floating around Khartoum that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak delivered a message from the Americans to Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir during President Mubarak's trip to Sudan this week. CDA Fernandez said that Mubarak did not have a message from the Americans and speculated that Mubarak told Bashir to do something on Darfur rather than just offering verbal promises to improve the situation in Darfur. The Egyptians are worried that in the event of an ICC indictment of Al-Bashir, people within the NCP will begin to turn on each other, said Fernandez. The Egyptians prefer Bashir's rule to the rule of an extreme Islamist, he continued. They fear a palace coup and the complete unraveling of Sudan that in turn makes their northern border far more unsafe, said Fernandez. Their (the Egyptian) message seems to be that Bashir should do more, he said.

COMMENT

18. (C) One can only hope that Amum's assessment that Bashir is genuine in wanting to reach peace in Darfur - but only in

order to save himself - is likely an accurate one, particularly as the clock ticks down towards an ICC and UNSC decision on Bashir's fate. The problem will be sustaining today's pressure on Bashir once the ICC warrants are (likely) issued in the next couple of months while at the same time offering the regime some credible incentive for changed behavior. While the USG cannot alter the timing of the ICC decision, it can keep the pressure on the GoS regime during the transition from one USG administration in order to force and/or entice the GoS to make positive, transformative progress on Darfur. The USG should also continue to encourage Bassole to engage in shuttle-diplomacy by spending more time in the field with key rebel movements ahead of the announcement of GoS-rebel negotiations. Chadian President Deby is certainly a key link to getting groups like JEM to participate in negotiations, then the USG should encourage Bassole and the Qataris to work closely with Deby over the next few months to encourage him to become part of the solution. We are not so naive as to expect that all of this will work out flawlessly, but continued US engagement and pressure on the regime as well as the rebels and Deby may encourage some positive results from the Doha talks, when they are finally held.

FERNANDEZ